

5. We must insist that free oratory is only the beginning of free speech; it is not the end, but a means to an end. The end is to find the truth. The practical justification of civil liberty is not that the examination of opinion is one of the necessities of man. For experience tells us that it is only when freedom of opinion becomes the compulsion to debate that the seed which our forefathers planted has produced its fruit. When that is understood, freedom will be cherished not because it is a vent for our opinions but because it is the surest method of correcting them.



'The unexamined life', said Socrates, 'is unfit to be lived by man'. This is the virtue of liberty, and the ground on which we may best justify our belief in it, that it tolerates error in order to serve the truth. When more men are brought face to face with their opponents, forced to listen and learn and mend their ideas, they cease to be children and savages and begin to live like civilized men. Then only is freedom a reality, when men may voice their opinions because they must examine their opinions.

The only reason for dwelling on all this is that if we are to preserve democracy we must understand its principles. And the principle which distinguishes it from all other forms of government is that in a democracy the opposition not only is tolerated as constitutional but must be maintained because it is in fact indispensable.

The democratic system cannot be operated without effective opposition. For, in making the great experiment of governing people by consent rather than by coercion, it is not sufficient that the party in power should have a majority. It is just as necessary that the party in power should never outrage the minority. That means that it must listen to the minority and be moved by the criticisms of the minority.



# Core Principles of Democracy

Free oratory is the initial stage of freedom which is a way to find the truth. True liberty is when people are free to present their viewpoints in a discussion regarding governance. Freedom of speech would be of worth, only if it serves to correct the flaws in governance. Scholars also view unexamined opinions worthless. Moreover, freedom is about justifying beliefs and forbearing the criticism for the sake of truth and improvements. Democracy can only be sustained by knowing its principle of tolerance. Furthermore, democracy is dead without opposition. Because it is not merely about <sup>the</sup> majority rule but also about including and listening to the criticism of minority.

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